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THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

THE PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUALITY IN THE META- PHYSICS OF BERNARD BOSANQUET.

THE task of philosophy, according to Dr. Bosanquet, is to characterize reality, to find out a vital idea or set of ideas wherewith to criticize and organize experience. Such an idea must have in some sense of the words universal application. It is important then to consider what is the type of universality which Dr. Bosanquet takes to be valid. The concrete universal is above all things a name for our most active and adequate, and therefore most normal way of looking at the world. For practical purposes, as for instance in the course of a strictly mechanical pursuit, such as tabulating the results of a statistical investigation, the mind may concern itself with mere generalizations, with repetitions as such. But Dr. Bosanquet has a well-founded doubt as to whether those who reduce all so-called rational processes to the handling of repetitions really have in mind what he himself would call rational experience. Bergson's view of logic,¹ and his consequent falling back upon intuitionism, for instance, seem to Dr. Bosanquet to result from an unaccountable failure to consider conscious process as a whole, from an unwarranted abstraction of reflection out of the whole complex of experience which actually does keep it alive and effectual. Consciousness at work in the world of all our experience, the consciousness that takes us through a wide-awake day of tasks accomplished, beauties enjoyed, human relationships developed, though essentially rational, is not chiefly concerned with abstraction. We do not feel our way along experience with a measuring rod, nor on the

¹ See *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 54.

other hand do we transcend the guidance of reason in order to find our way, but live and grow as rational beings. Even in the course of what might be called habitual action, not guided by conscious reflection, as for instance the finger action of a trained pianist, there may be a precise and instantaneous adjustment to new and difficult situations. Thus we do not need to go to formal logic to discover the concrete universal. The term means the dominant form of any man's experience, "a system or habit of self-adjusting response or reaction, whether automatic or in thought, over a certain range of stimulation."¹

Concreteness appears in the very unity of thought, which is asserted through diversity. All concrete thought, *i.e.*, thought about things, is immediate no less than mediate. We must then "admit thought to be in part intuitive,"² in so far as we are conscious not only of its function as analyzing, but also of its synthetic action. It is from this quality of thought that we get our use of words and of all symbols. If, as Mr. Bradley seems at times to imply, we could not rest at all in the unity of thought, there would be lacking the impulse to frame it up in communicable form.³ We enter into a state approximating to this discursive hesitation when, for example, we are attempting to solve a problem in metaphysics and have not arrived at a point of synthesis in our thinking, so that we are still unable to communicate what we have, so to speak, partially framed up in our own mind. Thought is of course in part discursive, getting farther and farther beyond the given. On the other hand, it may return ever and again to a fuller unity than that from which it started. And

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³ Cf. Mr. Bradley at his best: "Nothing is perfect, as such, and yet everything in some degree contains a vital function of Perfection." *Appearance and Reality*, Second Edition, p. 487. T. H. Green's theory, that reality can be resolved into a system of relations, if pressed home to its conclusion, amounts to a denial of this 'unity of thought' functioning in finite individuals, and cannot account for the satisfaction which finite consciousness finds in reality, or for the immediate aspect of any group of relations. A patch of color, say a rift of blue sky,—as we shall find Dr. Bosanquet maintaining,—cannot be described merely as a system of relations, nor even merely as a term, nor can it be adequately defined as the result of the action of certain physical laws. It is an unbroken effect.

although perfect unity can never be attained, still there remains present to thought a standard of wholeness or self-containedness "in which thought is at home with itself in reality, and assumes the attitude of an intuitive understanding."¹ One is apt to demur a little at this phraseology, as if it implied a subjective theory. But what we actually have here is a statement concerning the responsive universe. Thought finds *itself* in reality. By thought is meant not bare abstract reflection, but fully conscious experience, a complex in which feeling cannot be abstracted from rationality. If an object were thoroughly resolved into forms—that is, if all its qualities came to have their full meaning for us, not only as belonging to the object, but in their reference to the larger world of which every object must be a part, we should then find it inadequate to say that we were dealing with identity in difference.² Likenesses or identities would not disappear, because it is by virtue of them that experience is thinkable. But instead of the abstract consideration of likenesses and differences, we should have a thorough comprehension of the whole complex, the true universal, which Dr. Bosanquet calls 'a system of connected members.'³ Ideally we should accomplish the construction of a 'world.'

From one point of view, then, the universal is the very synthesizing activity by which we get on in experience. But this activity cannot be divorced from the material in which it works. The universal is no more a movement of consciousness than it is the structure of reality physically existing, or having physical concomitants. If we did not abstract it as an aspect from the whole of experience, regarding it first from the point of view of the object, and then from that of consciousness, we should not dream of hypostatizing it.

Dr. Bosanquet has much to say of "the underlying solidarity

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 57.

² Because our subject matter would be concrete experience and not abstract logical theory. As a matter of fact Dr. Bosanquet uses these terms so frequently and in so many applications as to give to the expression of his system an abstract or formal appearance which does injustice to his thought. Note his admission that he was once inclined to think logic 'the whole of philosophy.' See *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, N.S., Vol. XV, pp. 7-8.

³ *Principle*, p. xix.

of spirits, the medium in which all great things are done.”¹ By this he means the connection set up between individuals on the basis of their identities. In the first place you and I live in the same world, so that in our experience taken separately there is an identical reference. But then each experiencing individual is a particular component of the whole. “It is true that my state of mind is mine, and yours is yours; but not only do I experience in mine what you experience in yours . . . but I experience it differently from you, in such a way that there is a systematic relation between the two contents experienced, and neither is intelligible or complete without the other.”² So in human intercourse we have a means not only for ‘identifying’ ourselves, but, just as important, for discovering new aspects of experience in others, and then, by reflection back upon ourselves, for apprehending new points in common there. It is by grace of what in another place Dr. Bosanquet calls “the overlapping of human experience” that we have a spiritual world at all, and it is because our imaginations find room to grow in such a world that creative activity is possible.

In the *Philosophical Theory of the State*, where Dr. Bosanquet is treating specifically the institution and the individual, we have opportunity to examine more closely what he means by such a phrase as ‘the underlying solidarity of spirits.’ The central point of his theory here seems to be expressed in the following sentence: “In institutions . . . we have that meeting point of the individual minds which is the social mind.”³ Neither the institution nor the social mind, however, are regarded as self-subsistent entities, hypostatizations independent of the conscious individuals concerned. Such an institution as a school, for instance, with its outward manifestations in space and time of building, teachers, and pupils, is the occasion for “a set of corresponding mental systems in individual minds.”⁴ These individuals have enough of experience in common so that, in each one of them, a meeting point is set up, but the institution consists no more specifically in this their agreement, than in the different

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 134.

² *Ibid.*, p. 315.

³ See page 172.

⁴ P. 170.

reaction which each individual makes to the situation as he individually conceives it. "In the dispositions of every mind the entire social structure is reflected in a unique form, and it is on this reflection in every mind, and on the uniqueness of the form in which it is reflected, that the working of the social whole, by means of differences which play into one another, depends."¹

The social whole, then, consists of the individuals that compose it, and *as* a whole, or a 'system of connected members,' does not appear to be in any sense comprehended self-consciously except in the conscious experience of those individuals. Of course, the association of individuals does produce a whole which is over and above the individuals taken separately. But in the case of the school, for instance, we have given an existing ground of the unity, *i.e.*, its building and equipment, affording an identity, connection, or meeting-point present in some aspect to the experience of every individual concerned. The consciousness of the unity is yours and mine. "Every individual mind, is, so far as it goes, for good or evil, the true effective reality of the social whole."² The universal is "a connection within" particulars, "not another particular outside them."³

The concrete universal, then, is at least a name for a description of how experience comes to us, and in order to get at the true nature of the unity of the concrete universal, we must attempt to examine the content of consciousness as such. Dr. Bosanquet gives us a somewhat detailed description of 'a content of sense.' "What I see when I look at a blue thing has unity, and life. . . . What does a unity of this kind consist in? Identity of ethereal wave-lengths? Not at all. That may be presupposed, but it will not do the work by itself. Blue is a peculiar 'effect': effect, I mean, in the artistic sense of the word; and wave-lengths, received say on a photographic plate, are not the peculiar effect which we call blue. . . . How do the elements of the effect hold together? . . . There is no push or pull between them. They work on each other through their identity and dif-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 174.

² *Ibid.*, p. 175.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

ference. . . . What sort of medium does such a unity involve? Surely, that of consciousness and no other. Blue, then, while it retains the characters of blue, must have in it the life of mind."¹ This description of the 'effect' of blue may be taken to suggest a denial of the theory that sensation can be resolved into relations, as well as of the realistic theory against which it was actually directed. Blue has a definite unity, a character of its own, over and above the results of any analysis of its constituents.

In order to understand as thoroughly as possible 'the life of the mind,'² which is synonymous with the concrete universal in its dynamic aspect, it is necessary to consider Dr. Bosanquet's analysis of the unity of self-consciousness. In a chapter on "Personal Feeling"³ he is at pains to clear away from the notion of the unity of the self certain misapprehensions which might confuse it. (1) It has been contended that the chief ground of this unity lies in the "*de facto* distinctness of immediate experience in different finite centres."⁴ It is said that I can never possess "the directly experienced quality of your mind." Dr. Bosanquet gets rid of this contention by granting it. Of course there is no denying the incommunicableness of my feeling consciousness as such. "It has to be remembered that all the wealth of our world has an immediate aspect, and . . . must pass through the form of feeling."⁵ Nevertheless, the important thing about *Hamlet* is not how Shakespeare felt when he was writing it. And the personality of a person who counts is great not because of a peculiar feeling which he is unable to communicate, but just in virtue of what he is able to get across to the rest of the world. "Thus the pure privacy and incommunica-

¹ *Mind and its Objects*, pp. 32-33.

² It is important to remember that Dr. Bosanquet means by the 'mind' here not a process of reflection, but a rational being experiencing. 'Experience,' 'consciousness,' 'the mind' are used more or less interchangeably, although 'mind' carries best the connotation of rationality which he is anxious to preserve. The distinctions, for instance, which he eventually discusses between the various 'worlds of reality,'—knowledge, art, life in society, are drawn inside the general term 'mind.'

³ *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 32 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

bility of feeling as such is superseded in all possible degrees by the self-transcendence and universality of the contents with which it is unified."

Dr. Bosanquet thinks it possible that an exaggeration of the importance of this distinctness of feeling may add strength to the theory that the unity of the self is maintained by opposition to a not-self. He reminds us, however, of the bad sense of the term 'self-consciousness,' used to describe a state of extreme shyness or self-preoccupation, and of how we are at our minimum of power when we are 'almost mere exclusiveness and antagonism.' After all, "our main point in conceiving Individuality is to maintain its freedom,"¹ and freedom we seem to achieve only when we forget ourselves and open the gates to receive the world. At great moments we have all our barriers down, and are not afraid of trespassers upon that arbitrary privacy of feeling which little souls cherish. But communicable feeling partakes necessarily of the universality which is admitted to be characteristic of cognition.

"No one would attempt to overthrow . . . the formal distinctness of selves or souls."¹ The distinctness of physical bodies in space is clearly insurmountable. Dr. Bosanquet stands firm on the basis of the laws of mechanics, and assumes "the rule . . . to be that one self cannot get to the experience of another self except by communication through the external world."² Admitting this rule, however, there is no given limit to the extent of communication possible. From the wireless telephone, and conjurer's tricks of 'mind-reading' which we may suppose dependent upon the transmission of infinitesimal physical signs, to the fine and thoroughgoing compatibility of close friends, we have all sorts and degrees of interpenetration of one self by another. But the important thing is that there shall be "stuff and material of unity, language, ideas, purposes," in short, "contents of communicable feeling," which is feeling *about* ideas.

There are however certain '*de facto*' limitations on the material range' of experience, which condition the 'power' of finite individuals. In a sense it is true that our conception of indi-

¹ *Principle*, p. 285.

² *Value and Destiny*, p. 47.

viduality as finite must always take into consideration the actual powerlessness of finitude. Its 'measure of power' seems on examination to be the measure for us of a given personality. We seem justified in feeling that unity and power go together, and that "where power ceases, unity must also find its limit." The principle of unity lies nevertheless not in negation but in affirmation, not in what it cannot include, but in the conditions allowing positive inclusion of material. Our limitations are so constantly shifting. As we say, a great occasion makes us rise above them. Limitation, from the point of view of a self whose nature as rational is to include, is an imperfection rather than a characteristic.

Fortunately, even from a superficial observation of society, we are conscious of a certain amount of compensatory adjustment, so that particular limitations do not seem so hopeless after all. We attempt or are forced by circumstances to fill in where our particular capacities make us useful. Thus we piece out one another's imperfections. It is interesting to note that our capacities for usefulness in the community are not regulated strictly in relation to our bodily equipment, as is the case with ants and bees, for instance. We transcend the immediate givenness of our capacity as physical organism in countless incalculable degrees.¹

Although we assume a specific function for each human being, there must be 'identity' between these beings as well as 'difference,' in order that coöperation and communication shall be possible. Not only must a man be conceivably ready to lay down his life, his formal diversity, for the sake of one of the greater wholes to which he gives his allegiance, but he must be ready also to live and to realize that he is by no means wholly irreplaceable in these wholes. He must be ready to hear his own ideas

¹ Dr. Bosanquet warns us again and again to avoid "our tendency to construe minds as similar things, repeating one another like human bodies." We are not to hypostatize them as things at all. The incalculable power of self-conscious beings must not be understood as available independent of body, nor as implying a capricious 'genius' not necessarily involved with the universe, but the ways of such beings, as self-conscious, cannot be adequately described by the 'push-and-pull' category of cause and effect. Cf. H. G. Townsend, *The Principle of Individuality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hill Green*, pp. 44, 53, 60.

spoken by another, to see the results of his research published the month before his own paper is ready for press. *De facto* evidence for the specific function, as such, of each formal finite centre, is lacking. On this point of the place and function of finite individuals as we know them, Dr. Bosanquet is not altogether definite, but the whole tendency of his thought is to stress the 'supra-individual' extent and importance of the ends to which such individuals devote themselves. We have already quoted him as saying that the entire social structure is reflected in the dispositions of every mind in a unique form.¹ Taken at its minimal significance, the uniqueness of particular finite beings as postulated by Dr. Bosanquet is of a formal logical character. "We may fail to observe the differences in or in spite of which a repetition takes place," he explains. "But it is certain that if they were not there, there could be no repetition: that the two cases or examples having nothing to hold them apart, could not be two but one."² On the other hand he is at pains to call attention to the fact that uniqueness, in the sense of exclusiveness, or even in the sense of specific and peculiar function, does not seem to be demonstrable in our experience of finite individuals, and that it becomes increasingly difficult to demonstrate, the deeper we go into the meaning of human life. The actual motivation of our conduct, both ordinarily and at our best moments, seems to be, notwithstanding certain modern theories to the contrary, not self-expression for its own sake, but some one of an untold variety of concrete ends. And these ends seem to belong to us not so much by some inalienable connection with our incommunicable personal feeling, nor even because they are commensurate with our personal 'powers,' but partly because they fall to our lot in a course of events over which we have no control, and partly also because we regard them as desirable ends, for many reasons more or less completely thought out, but in which others are likely to be at least as much considered as ourselves, in which as a matter of fact the distinction between self and other is not very clearly made, and the actual present object to be attained is the most

¹ *Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 174.

² *Principle*, p. 117.

important consideration of all. In order to do justice to the significance of the present, as well as to the concrete unity of experience, it is necessary to construe individuality in terms of concrete meaning as a whole. We may say, then, that in so far as the mind is able to affirm a positive content, to resolve the contradictions in experience, *i.e.*, to organize experience into a whole, in so far real individuality is achieved.

Taken as we experience it in ourselves and others, at the varying levels of everyday living, the mind, or consciousness, of the so-called finite individual is obviously not a whole in the sense of a coherent whole. At any one moment we may find within it discordant ideas and motives, fragmentary sensations and impressions apparently irrelevant to what may be for the time being the main stream of thought. We may even find two more or less consistent and mutually contradictory 'systems,' each affording conceivable possibilities of action, included, so to speak, within the same mind. Dr. Bosanquet says, "A mind has its dominant nature, but is no single system equally organised throughout."¹ Again he says, "Though the mind must be an *actual* structure of systems, it is very far from being a *rational* structure of systems."²

Corresponding to these two sorts of whole, we have two meanings of the word 'include.' Dr. Bosanquet tells us in the course of a simple and comparatively non-technical description of conscious experience that the nature of mind is "to include," and that mind takes itself "as a world, not as an object in a world."³ Thoughts about absent objects, for instance, are 'included' in this world. They are distinguished from present objects, but the whole complex holds together for the observer, and the distinction between presence and absence, as well as that between inwardness and externality, legitimate as these distinctions are, can be made only inside the whole.

So far, however, we have said hardly more than that experience is experience. But we are to remember that we are considering 'the life of the mind,' the experiencing individual consciousness, not merely as a passive receptacle, but as dynamic, as reacting

¹ *Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 165.

² *Ibid.*, p. 173. Ital. mine.

³ *Mind and its Objects*, p. 27.

functionally on experience. From this point of view we may still say that it is the nature of mind to include, but this time we mean to include *actively*, 'to resolve the contradictions in experience.' The normal life of a conscious being requires the continual adjustment of new experience to old, the gathering together and coördinating of ideas bearing upon experience, the trained response of the whole man to the continuously changing circumstances of his environment. This function of adjustment belongs to mind in the larger sense already noted, although it may be examined at close quarters, so to speak, in logic. "This, then, is the nerve of logical determination, viz., the removal of error or contradiction by means of a positive union in which data or premises destroy each other's defects, and give rise to a new totality which transcends its factors. This is the essential process of experience throughout, and in all its kinds, and when traced and analysed in proportional form it reveals itself as logic—the creative and originaive nexus of mind as such."¹

We find in many places in Dr. Bosanquet's works,—too many for specific quotation,—reference to the 'nisus and endeavor towards a whole' which is characteristic of the nature of mind. That is, although we may permit irreconcilables to exist together in our reflective consciousness, this is possible only because they dominate over the whole system of experience in alternation. The presence of irreconcilables which make an equal claim to domination means the dissolution of personality. The normal effort, even for practical purposes, is 'to make the world synthetic,' to find out rules which work universally, or, to speak in more technical terms, to make every difference fit into the system of the whole.

But it is clear that this is a process of inclusion in which something is destroyed. We do not carry around with us all our illusions and delusions of the past, like so many sticks in a basket. Correction, cancellation go on with us continually. Some phases of this process, the adjustments of vision, for instance, are automatic; others, like the acquirement of knowledge in any particular field, come by reflection. But the principle is the same. In

¹ *Principle*, p. 264.

view of the great significance to us of this type of experience of inclusion, the assumption of an 'Absolute' which should 'include' in the first sense all the fragments and scraps left over from our ineptitude would seem to be peculiarly unsatisfactory. There are passages in which Royce seems to suggest such an assumption.¹ Such passages may be interpreted in connection with what he has to say² about selective interest, and about purpose as adjustment,³ but taken by themselves they represent a tendency to bring all experience to the same level of significance, a tendency certainly not justified by observation of human lives.

On the other hand, it is possible to carry too far the notion of an inclusion by which something is destroyed, until the plain distinctions, which give all its point and meaning to experience, are conceived as lost in 'the Absolute.' This tendency comes out in what Professor Pringle-Pattison calls 'the Spinozism' of Mr. Bradley.⁴ For although he maintains that "there is but one Reality, and its being consists in experience,"⁵ he declares on the other hand that the unity of the various aspects of experience is unknown,⁶ and this because the coming together of its distinct or 'antagonistic' elements means that their distinctness is lost. The completion of truth would cease to be truth, because in such completion "all distinction . . . must be suppressed."⁷ We have already noted Mr. Bradley's distrust of the 'discursive intellect,' or the finite faculty of judgment, and suggested Dr. Bosanquet's answering contention that the mind does in a manner continually come home to rest in reality, so that thought is hardly the incurable malady that Mr. Bradley represents it as being. It is when Mr. Bradley is emphasizing this 'dialectical difficulty' that he conceives of an 'Absolute Experience' in which all distinctions

¹ Cf.: "Our theory does indeed unite both your act and the idea that your act expresses, along with all other acts and ideas, in the single unity of the absolute consciousness." *World and the Individual*, p. 463 f. See also pp. 427, 469 ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 449.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

⁴ See *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 156 f.

⁵ *Appearance and Reality*, second edition, p. 455.

⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 468.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 462.

shall be 'lost.'¹ The logic of this conception leads irresistibly to a blank featureless Absolute, in which all determination is negation. But Dr. Bosanquet maintains that more knowledge, more systematic 'inclusion,' means more rather than less determination, so that there is nothing to indicate that a completely systematic reality would lack distinction. The knowledge, for instance, of a trained botanist becomes more rather than less definite, so that delicate differences of function and structure, fine interdependences, appear to him in an ever-increasing manifold. Where his knowledge is systematic rather than contradictory there is no tendency toward loss of distinctions.

We have already had occasion to note the limitation in power which characterizes the finite self. This limitation is realized most clearly when we have grasped 'the principle of individuality' as the tendency of the mind to function as 'a spirit of totality,' to include without contradiction more and more of experience so as to approximate a perfect whole. There would appear to be a hopeless discrepancy between the ideal of my finite mind and what it is able to accomplish, between the actual finite self with his vague and fragmentary character, and the perfectly rounded being which his best instincts suggest to him as ideal. It is in this contrast between the nature of ideal knowledge and its actual imperfection, between persons and the ideal of individuality inherent in them, that we have what Dr. Bosanquet calls "the fundamental inference" to the Absolute,² the inference *a contingentia mundi*, or the "inference from the imperfection of data and premisses" to "a rational reality transcending the given," "the passage from the contradictory and unstable in all experience alike to the stable and satisfactory."³ It is the nature of finite mind, the impulse in it to unity, which leads us irresistibly to postulate ultimate unity in reality.

In order to answer more concretely the question: what is the nature of the unity in reality, or, in other words, what is the principle of inclusion by which individuality is achieved? we

¹ He appears at such times to lose sight of the doctrine of degrees of reality which he maintains at other times.

² *Principle*, p. 257.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 267, 268.

turn necessarily to what Dr. Bosanquet calls 'the higher levels of experience,' where the soul is at highest stretch,—*i.e.*, includes most, approximates most nearly to individuality,—and examine the process by which transition is made to these 'higher levels.' We have noted that 'the fundamental nature of the inference to the Absolute' consists in just such a transition, in "the passage from the contradictory and unstable in all experience alike to the stable and satisfactory."¹ So if we succeed in approaching a clear understanding of the nature of this transition, we may expect to have within our grasp a working principle of the whole, to arrive, that is, at one of the coveted 'vital ideas' which shall be above hypothesis.

Dr. Bosanquet sets this principle forth in summary terms: "The general formula of the Absolute . . . the transmutation and rearrangement of particular experiences, and also of the contents of particular finite minds, by inclusion in a completer whole of experience, is a matter of everyday verification."² We have already drawn a general distinction between two sorts of wholes, an *actual* structure, and a *rational* structure. We have now to consider (1) how we are to think these differing aspects of experience in relation to one another, and (2) what it is, more precisely, that takes place when transition is made from a lower level of experience to a higher.

In the first place, then, if we must take experience as implying one perfectly systematic whole, what is the meaning, in that whole, of the fragmentary, the apparently unsystematic aspects of experience? Hegel sometimes writes as if he were recognizing in the universe chance happenings, elements of contingency having no specific significance in the whole. He says, for instance, that the 'commencement' of certain positive sciences, such as jurisprudence, natural history, medicine, "though rational at bottom, yields to the influence of fortuitousness, when they have to bring their universal truth into contact with actual facts and the single phenomena of experience," . . . Such sciences "stumble upon descriptions of existence, upon kinds and distinctions, which are

¹ *Principle*, p. 268.

² *Ibid.*, p. 373.

not determined by reason, but by sport and adventitious incidents.”¹ It is in terms of degree of inclusiveness that Dr. Bosanquet interprets those differences in experience which have given rise to the traditional distinction between necessary and contingent truth. The differences, as he conceives them, lie between ‘levels of experience,’ or between the relaxed perceptions of surface living and the most intense, most deep-going and inclusive experiences. In describing the latter experiences, he sometimes speaks of ‘the full-grown nature of mind.’ The figure of growth is not quite suited, however, to carry his meaning, in so far as it tends to over-emphasize the element of time. Dr. Bosanquet refuses, indeed, to take the course of history as such to be the type of reality. The mere succession and change of events in time does not give us any clue for interpreting them, although ‘things temporal’ remain the only ground for all our inference, metaphysical and otherwise. In a prevailing metaphor, life is compared to the flowing of a mighty stream. This metaphor is truly descriptive of the temporal aspect of life, and attempts to do justice to its integrity, but nevertheless is not adequate, because the movement of life is also analogous to the rising and falling of a tide.²

The tendency to stress in experience the aspect of continual change Dr. Bosanquet calls ‘ignoring the concrete universal.’ “This is the defect,” he says, “which leads us to suppose that concreteness and contingency are inseparable, and makes us confound the apparent contingency of details within a cosmos, whose main members are necessary to the whole, with the contingency at the heart of a spatio-temporal world of incident, which has never been re-created by experience of the dullest type.”³ Here we have Dr. Bosanquet’s view of accident in one rather difficult sentence. From what might be called the external viewpoint, there is such a thing as contingency. Details looked at casually, or life lived wrong-headedly, will appear in the guise of mere ‘changes and chances,’ included in experience actually but not rationally. Nevertheless the casual or wrong-headed judgment itself is knit into the structure of reality, and brings down upon

¹ *The Logic of Hegel*, tr. by William Wallace, second edition, p. 26.

² See *Principle*, p. 373.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

the devoted head of the judger inexorable consequences. By the 'contingency at the heart of a spatio-temporal world of incident' Dr. Bosanquet means then first of all the aspect of things as only partially understood by the conscious observer. "Take any minimum of experience," he says, "work out its implications; and it will bring you to a central or concrete view of things." This does not mean that the significance of the incident as it stands, or as it is at first conceived, has necessarily any final validity. We are not, in other words, logically headed for the 'basket' Absolute. A wraith of mist may look at first sight like a white-robed figure. This would be a partial meaning, capable, if taken in a context sufficiently large, of being transmuted into a complete and therefore necessary truth.

For in the second place Dr. Bosanquet means to admit and to stress the difference between the maximum and the minimum of content in experience. A drift of smoke in the air, a word spoken inattentively, are obviously, taken in abstraction, less inclusive, less significant, than a blazing forest or the plain expression of a profound faith. But the slighter manifestations are no less necessary, in the sense of fully conditioned, accountable, and productive of characteristic results, than are the more complex ones. Dr. Bosanquet is at greater pains than Hegel to protect his statements concerning the minimal aspects of experience, and seems at first sight to be committing himself to a mechanistic determinism. But both Hegel and Dr. Bosanquet are fundamentally agreed, first that the categories of mechanism, 'the laws of the world of time or space,' are not adequate to explain the worlds, infinitely more complex, of art or personality for instance, and second, that there is but one universal, one nature of reality, of which all 'existents' must in greater or less degree partake. There is no universal outside the particulars, and, conversely, there is no particular which has not a relevant meaning in the universal system.

So what we have in our experience as self-conscious beings is not 'determinism,' a nature applied by force from without, but 'determinateness,' an inherent nature which we both *have* and *are*.¹ In this view of accident, Dr. Bosanquet turns on the one

¹ See *Principle*, p. 340 ff.

side from the theory of pan-psychism, which refers the happenings in this world, both on the level of demonstrable consciousness and below it, to the capricious impulses of partially irrational psychic beings, and on the other from materialistic or fatalistic determinism. With the results of the exact sciences in mind, Dr. Bosanquet cannot look upon the 'natural world' as chaotic, or think of nature as engaged in a bacchic orgy of contingency. Moreover—and here is the deep point at which we may drown in the vain attempt to save our 'uncriticized desires'—the laws of the spiritual world are just as inexorable as the so-called natural laws, nay more, they are, as we shall see, but aspects of the same universal law. At all levels of development the 'individual,' in so far as he achieves individuality, is on the one hand 'selected,' or struck out by his environment, gets all his differentiations from without. On the other hand, he is *within* the rational whole, the nature of it is explicitly active in him, so that in him lies not only the complementary capacity for responding to and suiting the very environment which forms him, but also for acting upon and moulding this environment. It is precisely by reason of our belonging in the nature of us to 'the rest' of the universe that we are able to be free, are able, that is, in so far as we understand the rest of the universe, to act effectively in it and on it. But we pay the price, not only as *de facto* selves but as members of a larger whole, when we act blindly or capriciously. Such a theory is far from presenting us with 'the benevolent straitwaistcoated institution,' which Mr. Russell imagines idealism to be, or with the 'marble temple shining on a hill' of William James's idealistic student. It requires renunciation, at this particular point, not only of unfounded faith in the independence of mind, or rather, of conscious will, but also of a sentimental despair over the inexorable course of natural law. It is a philosophy which accepts the world as it is, with the enormously exacting proviso that we do our best to find out *what* it is, and especially what is our place and function in it as self-conscious beings.

We have seen that there is no distinction, in point of necessity, to be drawn between the simpler and the more complex aspects of experience. Patience and imaginative insight brought to the

former would start the investigator on an inevitable approach to the higher levels of experience, and so to an understanding of the whole. If, however, an understanding of the whole is what as metaphysicians we are after, we shall best keep the rule of economy which is set for all investigators by giving our attention directly to the higher levels of experience, to 'the full-grown nature of mind,' where we have fullest content, greatest degree of rational inclusiveness, the truest individuality. It is in experience at this level that we must seek for the 'vital idea or set of ideas' wherewith to criticize and to interpret reality.

By application of this criterion of rational inclusiveness, Dr. Bosanquet is led to consider such experiences as the intellect at its full stretch, aesthetic appreciation, creative activity, various aspects of community and personal loyalty, the religious experience. He finds at work in all these experiences what he calls the principle of transmutation,—giving rise to *self-transcendence*, or the positive realization of self in other. This in brief answers the second question put by this chapter, as to what happens when we make the transition from a lower to a higher level of experience.

It is noteworthy that in a chapter entitled "Ourselves and the Absolute,"¹ we do not find a description of the relation of the finite self to an eternal consciousness somehow hypostatized and set above it. What we do have described and insisted on is our actual experience of self-transcendence. This amounts to a further insistence on the necessity for looking past the formal distinctness of selves in order to discover what it is to be a self. For in the first place, to say that 'self-transcendence' is the normal form of our experience, is another way of saying that the rational factor is always present in experience, whether or not it is *reflectively* present. "The moment we enter upon the reflective study of man," Dr. Bosanquet declares, "we learn that his individuality, his self-identity, lie outside him as he presents himself in time."² This does not mean that the real self of man is a *reduplication* of what is given in time, but simply a different,

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 257 ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 259.

deeper, and more consistent way of being than that which may be taken as immediately given within the compass of a certain moment.¹ There is a fearful human instinct urging us to hold on to some conception of the given, to maintain this definite self, as it goes and stands, against all encroachments from without, lest we be left with a mere abstraction or generalization, and find this definite self obliged to accept annihilation. Our love of the concrete, 'the little lighted room,' is as a matter of fact reasonable enough. In a very real sense we have no world but this, and no moment save the present. But the whole paradox of time and eternity lies just in such a sentence. For eternity is achieved in the complete meaning of this passing moment.

But 'the experience of self-transcendence' means more than this somewhat formal reiteration of the indissoluble connection between the rational factor and the rest of experience, between the self taken merely as passing in time and the *meaning* of this self in the eternal present. The experience of self involves an actual out-going and expansion of the self, and a displacement or destruction of some elements of experience in favor of others. It is not even necessary to go to the higher levels of experience to demonstrate so much of the working of the principle of transmutation. Something is displaced or subordinated in favor of something else in any sort of absorbed occupation, whether it be the enjoyment of a good meal or the promotion of a great cause.

The so-called higher levels of experience, however, exhibit most specifically the principle of rational inclusion. There is something more than the mere impulse toward inclusiveness of the other, than the mere 'transmutation and rearrangement of particular experiences' operative in the most vigorous and fruitful life. Just as there is something more than blind desire in our love for the dear details of daily life, so there is more involved than a mere bare activity or expansion of the self when we give some of them up for what we consciously regard as a greater thing. It is true that self-transcendence is the warp of all our experience. If we are living at all, we are living at least partially

¹ 'The given' is simply what we choose to take *as* given. It is always an abstraction cut out from a context indefinitely extended.

for and in another. But on the higher levels of experience, we are more or less consciously bent on escaping from "the contradictory and unstable in all experience alike to the stable and satisfactory."¹ In the higher experiences we are looking for stability, and arrive at satisfaction in so far as we secure it. If we were to stop with this statement, we should have just as abstract a theory as do these who declare that we are looking for activity. Stability is, as we shall see, one essential criterion for a satisfactory experience, but not a completely descriptive term for such an experience.

There is a theory in the air concerning the nature of satisfaction which Dr. Bosanquet is anxious to refute. It is put in various forms, popular and technical. The symbol of satisfaction for it is a road dipping up and over a hilltop,² or even the operator's seat in an aëroplane rushing out into uncharted space. Satisfaction, we are told, lies not in stable relationships, but in activity. From this point of view the permanency of the marriage bond, for instance, has no better reason than provision for the children, that they may have opportunity to go on with ceaseless activity in their generation. With complete satisfaction, we are told, would come satiety. There is no more joy to be had in singing hymns of the heavenly Jerusalem, for we know now that we do not want a heaven of fulfilled desires. Put more technically the theory tells us that reflective consciousness consists in solving concrete difficulties, in adjusting ourselves ever anew to concrete situations. Solved problems are shunted over to be taken care of by habit, and so are left behind by reflection.

Now, in so far as this theory leads to a realization that the significance of life lies in its present meaning and not in its outcome at some future time, Dr. Bosanquet grants its validity. He declares that "the great enemy of all sane idealism is the notion that the ideal belongs to the future."³ This notion, and also the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 268.

² *Cf.* "But whereso'er the highways tend
Be sure there's nothing at the end."

R. L. S.

³ *Principle*, p. 136.

theory just now under discussion, seem indeed to him but different expressions of the same fallacy,—an over-estimation of the significance of time. The conviction that heaven is achieved for the future by some ceremonial obedience in the present leads to the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, and to all the evils that go with an arrived aristocracy. It is true that one of the cardinal principles of the democratic idea was demonstrated by Hobbes when he declared all men to be equal on the ground of their universal and unquenchable desire for self-preservation, that desire so inevitably doomed to be brought low. It is the uncertainty, not only of life, but, as we should add today, of the tenure of excellence, which makes us equal. It is impossible to acquire merit, because each new acquisition of virtue demands new accomplishment.

It is but a development of the same idea to say that tension must be always present in satisfaction. The idea that joy lies in mere acquiescence or in bovine contentment is involved with the ancient confusion of 'well-being' and 'pleasure,' of *εὐδαιμονία* and *ἡδονή*, and leads to an erroneous pleasure psychology and beyond that to an inadequate philosophy which theory does right to dispute. It is true that we live in a concrete present and that we must stretch every nerve to meet its requirements. Dr. Bosanquet gives us an account of Aristotle's doctrine of the mean which is illuminating as interpretation, and at the same time significant in the present connection. "Only the true motive," he explains, "gives you the perfect act . . . how hard it is to be brave, and gentle, and modest, and calm, and wise. The brave and noble soul, and it alone, will ring true in every side and aspect of its act; time, place, manner, degree, behaviour to persons; all the characters which make up an act whose quality takes form in quantity, and is adapted to the situation with a beautiful adequateness, in every detail just right, neither too little nor yet too much, like the petals of a rose."¹ This extraordinary passage literally wakes up every nerve in the body, and at the same time inspires that still contemplation of full-rounded perfection which might be called mystic, but which is rather on the way to

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 397-8.

being completely intellectual, since it depends for its intensity on a concrete vision of details in their unified connection. In the same mood we have St. Bernard's solemn

"O bona patria,
Lumina sobria
Te speculantur,"—

and all the following panoply of words in his immortal description of felicity.

On the other hand, the notion that true satisfaction brings satiety gives undue prominence to the mere succession of events in time, and fails to allow for the *meaning* of experience as rational. This meaning consists not only in the 'nisus of mind towards a whole,' but also in its rest, by a sort of anticipation of perfection, in reality. Are we not conscious of an element of stability, not only in the requirements of each moment, but in our response to them, in so far as we succeed in responding adequately? Who has not had at least a foretaste of stable satisfaction in the adjustment which results from and accompanies effort? Dr. Bosanquet is apt to urge the experience of singing in a chorus, when the self, all concentrated, body and mind, in that vocal expression, is freed from its barriers of mere personality and merged in the volume of sound until the chorus seems like one harmonious instrument, of which the individual singer is but a necessary part. More universal still is the experience of friendly intercourse,—exchange of ideas, coöperation in work, common enjoyment of a rapid walk in wind and sun. We are conscious of a desire to put this quality of perfect adjustment, maintained by an effort keen and altogether wide-awake, into the whole of life. So we mark the difference between our fragmentary good and perfection.

But this is not desire for desire's sake, activity for activity's sake, nor is it on the other hand an approach to an habitual and purely mechanical adjustment. It is rather an intense appreciation of present felicity accompanied by 'an imagination of its infinite extension. Experiences like these do not derive their value from being wanted. Only undue attention to abstract theory could ever make us think so. To say that we fulfill ourselves in

them is still to use the phraseology of private feeling which Dr. Bosanquet is anxious to avoid. They are concrete,—are singing, or discussion, or writing, or walking, and are *what we want*, ends for which we are willing to sacrifice mere self-indulgences.

The theory concerning satisfaction which Dr. Bosanquet is criticising has on the one hand the virtue of emphasizing the present situation, but on the other falls into the old fallacy of abstraction. It overlooks the significance of experience as a whole. Having missed the character of thought “as a system of functions adapted to the removal of contradiction throughout experience,”¹ it is in search of an explanation for the continuity of experiencing, and more than half believes that we go from one day to the next merely on the strength of the fact that every day brings forth new situations. But it is not newness-in-itself, or activity-in-itself, for which we live, but for our work, our family, our religion,—for concrete goods, in which there are normally aspects or tendencies which we would fain believe to be permanent. “There are some things . . . the best . . . which our activity does not make, but only reveals. They are not in time.”

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¹ *Logic*, second edition, Vol. II, pp. 278 ff.